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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 002936

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SUBJECT: NINEWA: GOVERNOR AND COUNCIL CHAIR LIST PROVINCIAL
PRIORITIES

Classified By: Ninewa PRT Leader James Knight: Reasons: 1.4 (b) and (d)

This is a Ninewa Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) Ninewa message.

11. (C) Summary: Ninewa PRT Leader Knight made initial calls on Ninewa's Governor Kashmoula and Provincial Council Chair Issa 3 Aug 06. Individual discussions were followed by a working lunch at which both attended. Security in Mosul remains the primary concern of both. Kashmoula again pressed for a series of watchtowers to oversee Mosul's road network and asked for help averting a looming fuel shortage; Issa lamented the lack of adequate intelligence on insurgents and the ubiquity of corruption, especially at the Syrian and Turkish borders. Team Leader was joined by Deputy Team Leader COL Grant and Governance Team Liaison Officer LDCR Webb. End Summary.

12. (C) Provincial Council Chair Issa also raised the prickly issue of the Rabiya toll station on the Syrian border. The station was jointly inaugurated in late 2005 by the Governor and a senior Coalition representative (BG Bergner) as a Provincial facility to collect tolls on commercial traffic entering Ninewa province to fund school construction. The toll station was closed by the Provincial government earlier this year following objections raised at the national GOI level. At this meeting PC Chair Issa presented a letter from the Secretariat of the Council of Ministers dated 17 Jul 06 explicitly forbidding collection of taxes, duties, and tolls in Ninewa pending legislative authorization (letter and translation provided to NCT/Baghdad by e-mail). Issa considers this action by the Council of Ministers to keep the Rabiya toll station closed yet another index of endemic corruption in the GOI, especially at the Syrian border.

13. (C) In response to Team Leader's query regarding his current priorities for the province, Issa listed electricity and health. Irregular power for Mosul stalls economic progress and provision of basic services. He also expressed concern for the state of health services in Ninewa, especially Japanese-donated medical commodities currently awaiting transport from Basrah.

14. (C) Meeting separately with the Team Leader, Provincial Governor Kashmoula pressed for support for a network of 14 watchtower sites for critical areas in Mosul, which he believes will enable Iraqi Army (AI) forces to maintain effective oversight of Mosul's streets while police forces (IP) would

patrol in neighborhoods. (Note: Kashmoula has presented this plan to Coalition maneuver commanders in Ninewa as well; it would be very costly (an estimated USD 1 million) and its potential effectiveness is unclear. In earlier conversations with PRT's Governance team, he had agreed to vet the proposal through Ninewa IA and IP commands -- that process is still pending, although there has been tentative support for three such towers. End note.)

¶5. (C) Kashmoula's second priority at this meeting was resolution of Ninewa's enduring fuel problem. Noting that Ninewa has only a two-day supply of essential fuels, he asked for the Team Leader to bring this festering and potentially explosive problem to the attention of GOI ministries to find a timely solution. Kashmoula emphasized that these enduring fuel shortages impede all basic services in Mosul.

¶6. (C) In response to another Team Leader query regarding internally-displaced persons (IDPs) in Ninewa, Kashmoula noted that 1300 IDP families (about 7500 individuals) are currently registered and receiving Provincial, NGO (esp. Red Crescent) and private support. (Note: Other interlocutors indicate the current number is closer to 2500 families. End note.) He added that a contract is being let to erect a 100-tent IDP facility at Ninewa Woods, near former FOB Courage. He anticipates that this facility will meet foreseeable IDP needs in the Mosul area.

¶7. (C) PC Chair Issa joined Kashmoula and the PRT team for a working lunch following this discussion.

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Deputy PRT Leader COL Grant took this opportunity to compliment the Provincial Government's progress in building cohesion within the Provincial Council and between the Council and Directors General responsible for services and programs in the province. He also queried progress towards resolution of telephone outages at Ninewa's Provincial Joint Communications Center (PJCC -- the primary office for emergency response, detainee tracking, and other priority services); Kashmoula promised resolution of this problem within 10 days. COL Grant also noted the upcoming transfer of fiscal responsibility for the PJCC to the Provincial government; Kashmoula pointed out that no GOI ministry is currently prepared to accept responsibility for PJCC salaries and operating costs, and that the Provincial government has no direct authority to do so.

¶8. (C) Comment: Emerging problems of GOI assumption of oversight and recurrent costs for a range of Coalition-sponsored initiatives will become more urgent over the short to medium term. In Ninewa the current question revolves especially around the PJCC; resolution of this particular matter will require adequate funding authorized by either the Ministry of Interior or the Ministry of Defense, but the broader issue of sustaining such programs at the Provincial level needs enabling legislation and engagement by GOI ministries. End comment.
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